



LEARN

GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR PC WITH OUR PRACTICAL TIPS

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HOW TO...

Use Gmail for online storage

Julian Prokaza shows you how a simple and free software utility can help you to use your email account as an online hard disk drive for all your storage needs

Gmail caused something of a stir last year when it launched a webmail service offering 1GB of storage space. Since then, that figure has been increased to 2GB.

Of course, that capacity is intended for archiving email, but a few clued-up people have found other ways to exploit this generous handout of gigabytes. Using a free software utility that's available on the internet, it's possible to turn a Gmail (or indeed Hotmail) account into an online hard disk drive.

Don't worry if you don't have a Gmail account; though still technically an invitation-only service, Gmail accounts are easy to come by. Here we show you how.

1 First, you need a Gmail account. If you don't already have one, just do a web search using a search engine such as Google (www.google.co.uk) for Gmail invites and you'll soon find what you're looking for. Then you need to download and install an application called RoamDrive. Go to www.roamdrive.com, click the Download RoamDrive icon on the left-hand side of the page and then click the Beta version link (no Pro version was available at the time of writing).

2 When you fire up RoamDrive for the first time, you'll need to enter your Gmail email address and password. Do this and click Save. RoamDrive can also work its magic on

Hotmail and MSN accounts. It will now attempt to connect to the specified webmail account and the window should change to display a Your Files pane.

3 Finally, drag and drop files into the Your Files pane as you would files between any two other windows. When you release the mouse button, RoamDrive will upload the files to a special folder of your webmail account. A broadband connection is the best way to do this.

The Your Files pane works just like any other window, and you can move, delete and rename files at will. The pie chart on the left-hand side of the application window shows how much of your webmail storage allocation you have used. 

